

## *What About Christmas?*

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This was a Pagan festival day long before it was observed and named "Christmas" by the Christian world. It was the Chaldean festival in honor of the birth of the son of the "Queen of heaven," or Astarte. It was observed among all Pagan nations on the 24th or the 25th of December. It has nothing in common with the birth of Christ, an event which most probably took place sometime between April and October, for the shepherds were out in the fields at night when the angels appeared to them announcing the birth of our Lord; and it is well known that it is not the custom for shepherds in Palestine to remain with their flocks at night after October on account of the cold rains, nor did they go out again until after the rainy season, commencing in September or October and ending in Spring. Also at the birth of Christ every man, woman and child was to go to be taxed at the city to which they belonged, and some, as Joseph and Mary, had to journey a distance. Christ's words in the gospel, "Pray that your flight be not in winter" (Matt.24:20), show that travel in the cold, rainy season of winter was attended with much, discomfort and therefore not a time likely to be chosen for such a taxation when women and children would have to travel and be out in the open.

With the Christian church no such festival as Christmas was ever heard of till the third century and it was not till the fourth century was far advanced that it gained much observance. It came into practice like Easter and other feasts of the Roman church calendar when the Roman church began taking over **heathen feasts and giving them Christian names**.

Over all the Pagan world a goddess **mother and her child** were objects of worship in different countries, having different names, but all bearing the stamp of the original system of idolatry inaugurated at Babylon. This goddess, almost universally called the "Queen of heaven," the "Mother of the gods," also often styled "the Virgin" and "Our lady," had different personal names. Worshipped by the Romans as Venus and the Ephesians as Diana (Acts 19:29) and called by the Greeks, Astarte, she is constantly referred to in the Old Testament as Ashtoreth (in the plural Astaroth) but more commonly in the King James version "grove," a mistranslation of the Hebrew "Asherah". (See I Kings 11:5, 33; II Kings 23:13; I Samuel 31:10; II Kings 21:7; II Chron. 33:7; Judges 6:25-30; I Kings 16:33, etc.) She is called the "Queen of heaven" in Jer. 7:18; 44:17-28.

Her child was claimed to be the reincarnation of the Sun-god after his meritorious death. He was claimed to be the promised "Seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15) . His name Zoroaster means "**seed of the woman**" and his constant emblem was a branch. Therefore his birth was celebrated with great festivity. He is constantly pictured on the ancient monuments as a child in his mother's arms, both wearing a circle around their heads, just as is common today in pictures of Mary and her child. This circle was the hiero-glyphic representation of

the sun and also the "Seed of the woman." We find this child and sometimes the mother represented in the idolatrous imagery as the destroyer of the serpent.

**"Yule"** is the Chaldee name for an infant. The Pagan Anglo-Saxons, whose idolatrous system was borrowed from Babylon, called the 25th of December on which they celebrated their feast in honor of the birth of this child, Yule day, long before they came in contact with Christianity or the name Christmas was given to it by the Roman church. When Nimrod was deified he was worshipped in the ancient Babylonian system of idolatry as the great Sun-god incarnate. According to their system the Sun was the supreme god. Incarnate in the person of Nimrod, worshiped under the name Tammuz, he met with a violent death claimed to have a certain meritorious value. A lamentation in memory of this death was celebrated in all Pagan countries, also among the idolatrous Jews (Ez. 8:14). He again reappears on earth reincarnate as the child of the Queen of heaven. This birth which took place, according to the idolaters, soon after the winter Solstice, was celebrated in all the Pagan world on or around December 25th, with much drunkenness, hilarity and obscene revelry. The boar's head, the goose and yule cakes that are a standard dish for Christmas dinners in many places, are often seen pictured on the ancient monuments in connection with this god and they had a special place in their drunken festivities in honor of his birth. The **cross** always used by the Pagans on the cakes was the **sign of Tammuz**, the cross being the old form of the letter "T", the initial letter of Tammuz.

The great god, cut off in the midst of his power and glory by a violent death, was symbolized in the idolatrous imagery as a huge tree stripped of all its branches and cut down almost to the ground, with a great serpent, the idolator's symbol of the life restorer, entwined around it, and the new born reincarnate god was depicted as a palm tree, the symbol of victory, sprouting up from the roots of the old stump. In Rome and other countries the fir and pine trees were used instead of the palm tree as the **symbol of this new born god**, shadowing forth under this figure of the evergreen the supposed **perpetuity and everlasting nature of his power**, now that after having fallen before his enemies he had reappeared triumphant over them all. Therefore at Pagan Rome the 25th of December as elsewhere was observed as the "birthday of the unconquered Sun." The **Yule log** (symbolizing the great god cut down by violent death) was thrown in the fire at evening and the evergreen tree loaded with gifts (symbolizing the reincarnate god victorious and giver of all divine gifts to man) were common in these Pagan festivities in honor of the birthday of the reincarnate god.

**Burning candles**, originally made of bees wax, so common in connection with the Christmas tree, has also its origin in Ancient Babylon from whence it became world wide in all the old idolatrous systems. Whence Nimrod was deified, as the Sun-god he was regarded not only as the illuminator of the material world, but as the enlightener of the souls of men and the revealer of truth. The word for "bee" in Chaldee signifies also "word" so the honey bee as well as the lighted bees wax candles were used as symbols of this Pagan god worshipped as the revealer of spiritual light to man. It was one of the peculiarities of the his worship to have lighted wax candles on his altars continually. They were also lighted by the Pagans on the eve of their drunken celebrations in honor of his birth and kept burning during all the time of their festivities.

When Nimrod was deified at Babylon as the Sun-god incarnate his wife, Semiramis, was also deified and worshipped as the "Queen of heaven" and "Mother of the gods." This system of idolatry spread throughout the ancient world. Therefore we always find the female goddess associated with the male god, who is first in his incarnation the husband, and then in his reincarnation the son of the goddess. They were worshipped under various names in different countries. In Egypt the god was called Osiris, the goddess, Isis. In the Old Testament the male divinity is commonly called Baal (Baalim in plural) which means simply lord or master, and the female divinity, always associated with him, Ashtoreth (Astaroth in the plural) generally translated "grove". In many passages of the Old Testament we find the two mentioned together. (See Judges 2:13; I Sam. 7:4; 12:10; I Kings 18:19; II Kings 21:3-7; 23:4-7,15.) The Ammonites call him Molech or Milcom (compare Jer. 19:5,6 with II Kings 23:10; I Kings 11:5, 7).

Both the date of celebration and many of the customs connected with the festivities of December 25th called Christmas are borrowed from the ancient Pagan festival in honor of the **birth of the child of the "Queen of heaven,"** and the Christmas tree with its gifts and burning candles is none other than the old Pagan symbol of Baal. So abominable in the eyes of the Lord was this worship of Baal, that He **cast Israel out of their land because of it!** How then can any God-fearing and blood-bought child of God allow such an abomination to ever enter his home?

Believers in our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be pleasing Him by adopting Pagan ceremonies and festivals and attaching His Name to them.

Surely if the Lord desires us to observe His birthday He would have said so, and made known the exact day.

The fact that God has not commanded the celebration of the birth of His Son is sufficient reason for any devoted child of God not to have any part in such practice. When one thinks of the revelry that goes along with it in which the worldly world and the religious world join hand in hand, the more clear it is that the faithful believer's path should be in separation from it all, as much as Daniel when he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the King's meat. Associating frivolity and mirth with the Son of God is monstrous when His mission to earth is considered, viz, to die in awful agony that a sinful world might be redeemed. What must all this merry-making by this world that crucified His only begotten Son, be to God? What a strange thing **to be keeping the birthday of One not trusted in!** When Jesus was born in the world, the rulers were troubled and sought to put Him to death. Now, the many are kissing Him, like Judas, **pretending to honor Him** on His birthday, but without love in their hearts for Him.

There is one day given to the Church of God – *"the first day of the week"* (Acts 20:7) – and our Lord has distinctly told us to remember Him in His death for us, in the breaking of the bread and drinking of the cup, saying, *"This do in remembrance of Me,"* but He has not told us to remember Him in His birth, and there is a meaning in all of this. We could have no connection with Christ in the flesh. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or abide alone (John 12:24). The gospel begins with the death of Christ: "Christ died for our

sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3, 4). And not only so, the believer has died and risen with Him on new ground. *"Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ"* (Col. 2:20); and *"if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above"* (Col. 3:1)

We, as Christians, should rejoice, ever, that Christ was born into the world to save sinners, but let us not blaspheme His Holy Name by associating His incarnation with the **fables and follies of Paganism**, or the superstitions of apostate Christendom, with its "Santa Claus" (**St. Nicholis, Roman Catholic saint**) and its gaudily decked Xmas tree. The question may be asked, what harm is there in telling the children of "Santa Claus?" Now honestly consider: Can "Santa Claus," a mere myth, a fable **having its origin in Roman Catholicism**, that idolatrous system, be owned of God? This "Santa Claus" is taught by parents to have **the very attributes of God Himself!** Parents talk of him as of a living spirit who sees and knows when boys and girls are disobedient, and who is able to travel through space, from north to south, east to west, in a few brief hours of time. Christian, you are teaching your child the first principles of idol worship; and telling an untruth yourself when you teach this wicked tale of "Santa Claus." Do you say, it is such a nice story for them, they are so little and must have their pleasure too? No doubt it is nice, and most agreeable to the flesh, or the world – whose god is Satan – would never relish it or commemorate it from year to year as it does. Some will argue for the "keeping of Christmas" on the ground of "giving the kiddies a good time." But why do this under the cloak of honoring the Saviour's birth? Why is it necessary to drag in His Holy Name in connection with what takes place at that season of carnal jollification? Is this taking the little ones with you out of Egypt (Ex. 10:9, 10), a type of the world, or is it not plainly a mingling with the present-day Egyptians in their *"pleasures of sin for a season"* (Heb. 11:25)? Scripture says, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Prov. 22:6), to bring up children *"in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"* (Eph. 6:4).

Do we ever give the children "a good time" when we engage in anything upon which we cannot fittingly ask the Lord's blessing? Some who are faint-hearted, shrink from withholding from their children what they think would give them pleasure, but how much better to instruct our children **in the truth** that they might early **know Him** and grow up to live lives devoted to Him in separation from all that is not of Him, thereby directing their steps in the only path where **true pleasure** is to be found.

There is usually more involved and more dishonor done to the Lord in current practices than we think. Devotedness to the Lord leads to the keeping of His words regardless of what others may do or say.

No one who acknowledges the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures to direct in all questions of doctrine and practice will have any fellowship in Christmas celebrations after his attention has been called to the matter, unless he does it deliberately in selfwill.

May there be close adherence to the Word of God with us, realizing its importance for God's glory and our blessing, believing that the omissions of Scripture are of importance as well as its statements. Heart for Christ and humble submission to that which is written will

result to God's glory, and our greatest blessing (Isa. 66:2; John 14:21).

Oh, Christian, turn from the world and its holy (idolatrous) days, touch not the unclean thing: **associate not the birth of the Holy Son of God with the fables of Paganism and apostate Christendom.** Hear His pleading voice, "Be ye separate, O my people." Consider well, as before God to whom you must surely give an account, are you endorsing the very principles of idol worship, and teaching your little ones to do the same? May God enlighten you, and give you strength and purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord alone.